

Preparing a debate

If you are asked to participate in a debate, there are a number of steps you can take to ensure your team presents a sound case.

1. At your first team meeting:

- Check that you know exactly what the moot is and what case you will be presenting
- Brainstorm and pool your ideas on the moot
- Think about both positive and negative arguments as they will help you make your own case and prepare you to counter your opponents' case
- Look up dictionary definitions of the words of the moot
- Do some research to help provide background material for your case

2. At the next team meeting:

- Divide your initial ideas up into two groups - those for your case, and those against your case (you will then be ready to argue and to rebut)
- Divide your whole case up into three parts and decide who will be your First, Second and Third speakers
- Discuss the arguments you can make to present a strong unified case i.e. help each other with ideas

3. Go away and prepare your individual debating speeches:

- Keep in mind which speaker you are, and prepare your material accordingly
- Format your speech with an introduction, body of points and a conclusion
- Remember that (unless you are First Affirmative Speaker) you need to leave room for rebuttal
- Write your speech out in full if you need to, then prepare cue cards for use in the debate.
- Make a brief summary, for the others, of the points in your speech, so that they will know what you intend to say
- Practise your speech under timed conditions, remembering that you are likely to speed up your delivery in front of an audience

4. Meet with your team members to discuss progress:

- Check you are all keeping the same line of argument
- Look at the summary of each other's speeches so you do not duplicate material
- Be prepared to share ideas to improve your team's case
- Look for the links in your arguments so that each speaker can build on the previous speaker's arguments

5. Meet again to run through your speeches:

- Check that you are all ready for the debate
- Discuss the possible arguments against your case, so that you will be ready for them in the debate

- Prepare some rebuttal arguments so that you can incorporate them into your speech during the debate
- Check that you have reduced your speech notes to the main ideas for your cue cards
- Practise your speech. Find a good strong opening statement, and prepare a convincing concluding statement

6. On debating day:

- Get there early
 - Support your fellow team members
 - Use your speaking skills to advantage
 - Enjoy the debate!
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